That's The Thing

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by WordsAblaze

Summary

"You promised!" Will whisper-shouts in lieu of a greeting.

Hannibal blinks, taking a deep breath to avoid jumping to conclusions. "Will. What's wrong?"

He can almost hear Will's incredulous expression through the phone. "What's wrong? What's wrong is that you promised nothing would happen. You said—you said we were safe."

"Are you unsafe, Will?" Hannibal asks, already halfway out of the door.

Notes

advance request to pls just ignore how ooc they may seem :))

day 9 prompts used: "you're a liar"

See the end of the work for more notes

When the phone rings in the middle of a therapy session, Hannibal, knowing that only Will's number can get through and the man himself would never call unless it was an emergency of some sort, sighs inwardly but wastes no time in sending his patient out of the room with a gentle apology and a slightly less gentle shove.

"You promised!" Will whisper-shouts in lieu of a greeting.

Hannibal blinks, taking a deep breath to avoid jumping to conclusions. "Will. What's wrong?"

He can almost *hear* Will's incredulous expression through the phone. "*What's wrong?* What's wrong is that you promised nothing would happen. You said—you said we were *safe*."

"Are you unsafe, Will?" Hannibal asks, already halfway out of the door even as his blood begins to boil at the thought of something having happened whilst his back was turned.

"I'm—No, I'm fine," Will replies, now breathing a little faster and shallower. "It's not—it's not me. I'm sorry. I'm safe. But—it's, uhm. It's Cephei."

Hannibal exhales softly; he knows that he could not survive losing Will but the two of them are more than capable of surviving the loss of their puppy. "Where are you now?" he asks, because he feels as though trying to communicate his relief would only end badly.

"The clinic. It's—I mean, she's doing… badly. I don't think she'll make it. You promised we'd be safe here. That… that this wouldn't happen," Will rambles, his voice thick with emotion that he'd clearly not allowed himself to acknowledge until Hannibal had answered the phone.

"I'll be there soon, Will," Hannibal assures him, thanking the lucky stars he keeps hearing about but doesn't entirely believe in that they live in a relatively small town, "do you need me to stay on the phone?"

A muffled conversation echoes down the phone, someone clearly approaching Will with new information, and Hannibal almost crashes the car when Will lets out a horribly strained noise, somewhere between a whimper and a wail.

"Will? Will, my love, are you listening?"

Hannibal drives faster as he hears the sound of a door opening and slamming shut, followed by the lull of traffic. He doesn't trust Will to engage in road safety, not with the grief he's just been thrown into, but he's still a few minutes away and there's nothing he can do to keep Will still from through the phone.

"You *promised* me, Hannibal. You—you *lied.* You're a *liar* , and I—I—you said she was *safe* and now she's—she's—" Will cuts himself off with a harsh sob, and Hannibal takes a moment to wonder why this is the loss he's reacting so badly to. But then he thinks of the tiny eyes peeking out from the sweet williams of their new garden, and he thinks of that bright

laughter as muddy bathwater had splashed all over their new bathroom, and he thinks of the hours spent fashioning dog food in their new kitchen, and he almost understands.

“I am truly sorry, Will.”

Will doesn’t reply, but he doesn’t have to, because Hannibal spots him sitting at the side of the road where he’s clearly tried to distance himself from the veterinary clinic but stopped and channelled his fury into the phone call rather than running.

Hannibal doesn’t take much notice of where he parks the car—it’s not like he can’t afford a fine or two—and gently settles on the ground beside Will. “What happened?” he asks slowly.

One long pause and three stifled sobs later, Will swallows audibly. “She—there was a woman. I was just… I don’t know, I was in the kitchen and she was just there and—and Cephei heard the fight and she—she jumped in. She… Hannibal, she *stabbed* her.”

Hannibal knows without a doubt that, had Cephei not been present, he’d have been making a trip to the hospital rather than the veterinary clinic. He doesn’t have to ask what happened next because Will continues: “She *stabbed* her again and again and she *gutted* her and—and I couldn’t—I just couldn’t. Couldn’t stop her. Not until it was too late. And Cephei—there was so much blood and the kitchen was *covered* in it and—and—”

...it was like Abigail all over again.

Thankfully, Will doesn’t tense when Hannibal shuffles closer and wraps his arm around his shoulders. Instead, he lets out a jagged whine and leans into the embrace, immediately clinging to Hannibal as if his life depends on it. Hannibal doesn’t even have the heart to mourn the loss of his now blood-stained, crinkled blazer because Will is safe and pointedly knife-free and nothing is worth more than the fact that he’s still alive and in Hannibal’s arms.

“I’m sorry,” Hannibal murmurs, placing a kiss atop Will’s dishevelled curls. He’s grown them out entirely since they’d moved, and Hannibal uses that to his advantage, gently carding his fingers through Will’s hair to soothe him as he rocks them back and forth.

Eventually, after far too long of an eternity, Will slumps into him, his sobs transforming into shaky breaths. “You said we would be safe, Hannibal.”

“I know,” Hannibal replies, hoping Will understands from his tone how disappointed he is that their safety has been compromised so brutally. “It won’t happen again.”

“You can’t really promise that,” Will mumbles childishly, but Hannibal doesn’t fault him for it because, much to his displeasure, the statement isn’t actually *wrong* .

"Did you see who it was?" Hannibal asks.

Will stiffens. "No. I mean, yes. I—I don’t know who she is. But her shirt… I know she was at the dinner party a few days back."

Hannibal inhales sharply, and tightens his grip around Will, pulling him as close as possible. Will, to his credit, allows himself to be tugged and shifted, and buries his face in the crook of

Hannibal's neck. "I'm sorry," he breathes into Hannibal's skin.

"No. No, Will. The fault here is mine and mine alone. I truly am sorry I permitted someone so cruel into our home and I truly am sorry I wasn't there for you."

But Will shakes his head, not quite pulling back but wriggling a little so he can poke Hannibal's side. "I don't need your constant protection," he hisses, his child-like grief fading into a more mature indignation.

Biting back a smirk, Hannibal nods. "Of course, I didn't mean to imply otherwise."

"Yes, you did," Will scoffs, but not *too* unkindly.

"Perhaps," Hannibal agrees, "but I cannot be faulted for wishing to avoid seeing you in such pain. I would sacrifice a thousand lifetimes to spare you from such grief."

After a moment, Will laughs, his whole frame shaking from the force of it. Pulling back enough to meet Hannibal's gaze, he shakes his head in clear disbelief. "I'm not asking you to do that for me."

"Do you think so little of me to believe I would not do so of my own volition?" Hannibal asks, tilting his head to one side.

Will blinks, once, twice, and sighs. "Hannibal. Please. I have forced enough sacrifices from you over the years, and you've done the same in return. I don't—more sacrifices would be… useless, now. I just—I just need—"

Hannibal's patience for watching Will glare at the road as he struggles to articulate himself lasts exactly thirty seconds. "What do you need, my love?" he whispers.

When Will meets his gaze again, the helpless shade of his fury has tinted into something darker, something sharper, something far more delightful. "I need an address," he confesses, and neither of them need to clarify whose.

"Consider it done," Hannibal promises.

With a grin, Will tips his head forward and his lips rest against Hannibal's neck once more, so close that a shiver runs through his spine. "Consider *them* done, hmm?"

Hannibal closes his eyes to savour the moment, crystallising the fierce sensation of Will's proposal against his skin for his memory palace, and can't hold back a grin of his own, despite knowing he'll most certainly be teased about it for weeks to come. He places a soft kiss to Will's temple and nods his approval. "Consider them *dinner* ."

End Notes

was cephei was named after the star or the disorder? place your bets...

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